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HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us — Coaches volunteer to bring on the cheer

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

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Winchester Cheer coaches Brianna Daisy and Erin Black volunteer to work with kids of all ages to learn about cheerleading and compete in tournaments. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/JOYCE WESTNER

You probably know that cheerleaders appear at sporting events t
their teams, but you might not know that cheerleading is a sport

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right. Or that Winchester Cheer coaches volunteer to help girls and boys learn and compete in cheerleading.

Middlesex Street resident Erin Black is the president of the Winchester Cheer organization, which started in town 15 years ago.

“Maria O’Connor started it in 2015,” says Wilmington resident Brianna Daisy, who also volunteers. She has no kids in the program but enjoys coaching.

“We accept kids from Winchester and from bordering towns,” Black points out. “We start practicing in August and go through December, if any of our teams qualify for competitions. It’s a fun competition and we compete against other town Cheer teams. This year, for the first time, all six of our teams qualified for the regionals.”

One of the cheer teams shows off their medals. COURTESY PHOTO/ERIN BLACK

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All six? Black explains that the teams have official names and also nicknames: the Mini Mavericks, aka the Tiny Mites is for kids 5 to 7; the Little Rebels (Mighty Mites) for 8 to 9; the Junior Rebels (Junior Pee Wee) 10 to 11, the Mavericks (Junior Varsity) for middle-schoolers; the Renegades (Bantams) for high-schoolers, and the Outlaws.

“The Outlaws,” Black explains, “is our adaptive team for kids with all abilities.”

She got involved when her daughter, Lucy, was on the Tiny Mites team back in 2019.

How did she become president? Daisy says, “We tricked her into taking the job.”

And how did a Wilmington woman with no kids get involved?

“My sister worked with a woman who knew about it,” Daisy says.

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Check out the medal winners! COURTESY PHOTOS/ERIN BLACK

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The teams practice for two hours three times a week, either at the Ambrose Elementary School gym, or at the Bay State All-Star Cheerleading gym in Woburn.

There are no tryouts, Black points out. And kids who are interested can try the cheer clinic.

“They’ll have so much fun,” Black says. “The kids are very welcoming.”

And Daisy says, “They gain confidence quickly.”

The local tournaments are at Woburn High School, league tournaments are in Methuen, and winners compete in Springfield. Judges look for overall performance and choreography: jumps, tumbling, gymnastics, stunts and dance.

Winchester Cheer is open to all kids who are interested in participating. Check out their websi
information. COURTESY PHOTO/ERIN BLACK

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“Our high school team won the nationals last year,” says Daisy. “Each team decides which level to compete at. The high school team has been at levels one and two, and right now they’re level three with the goal of getting to the top level of four in two years.”

She adds that it’s not about the skills.

“We focus not on the best cheerleaders,” says Daisy. “We’re about good people, building their confidence, helping them work with all different teammates. They learn how to communicate and how to support each other. It’s great seeing them develop. And they give back — we have some of the high school kids who become student coaches.”

“And it’s the family aspect,” adds Black. “The kids meet new families and everyone’s so welcoming — it turns into one big family, helping each other carpool, and even wiping away tears.”

Winchester resident Joyce Westner is one of the founders of Winchester News. She holds a degree in English and journalism from Northeastern University. If you have a suggestion for either a Meet the Artist or Helpers Among Us resident, email editor@winchesternews.org.

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On a cold and blustery day, two post-graduate Winchester High School students and others stood outside the Stop & Shop inviting folks to buy luminary kits as part of the Unite with Light event planned for Sunday, Dec. 14. The successful program was started by Mairin Norton, a high-schooler who

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Helpers Among Us - Alisa Dong needs your help with Thanksgiving food drive

Standish Lane resident Alisa Dong has only lived in town for about four years, but she's already immersed in helping people. And she wants residents to help her provide Thanksgiving Day meals for local food-insecure residents. A member of the town's Family Action Network (FAN), Dong is its

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Helpers Among Us - Patti Reilly wants your children's clothes

Although Patti Reilly opened her boutique, Jules, about a year and a half ago, she's already discovered the generosity of Winchester residents. That's why she and her

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Helpers Among Us - Austin Whitman takes on the cause of Winchester's trees

Austin Whitman has the ur of serving on a non-existent committee. "I ran into I-Ching Scott [former

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husband, John, decided to offer a 10% discount on one item to anyone who brings in “gently used children’s clothing.

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Planning Board member] who introduced me to David Miller, who was on the Conservation Committee,” he says. “Miller told me that the Permanent Street Tree Committee had gone dormant.” Still, Whitman

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Latest

FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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